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his relatives. This punishment is customary in cases of the upsetting of a canoe. Death is the penalty for throwing refuse into the river, particularly during the summer, and until the coming of the white man the River Guardian exacted it without hesitation.

THE PROFESSION OF UTTERING A DRONING CRY

At the appearance of masked figures representing supernatural beings, whether in *ɔɔaok* or *kusiut* dances, many of the women repeatedly utter a peculiar, high-pitched, droning cry which adds considerably to the weirdness and impressiveness of the occasion. Ability to do this depends on an ancestral prerogative duly confirmed by the distribution of presents. Many ancestral myths describe how some of the first women were given by *Ałquntăm*, or acquired in other ways, the right to drone, and mention is made of the name used by each with respect to this prerogative. Unlike the one previously described, many of the first women possessed this privilege, which is accordingly common at the present time. A name of this type is usually confirmed in girlhood, sometimes even in infancy, and being of relatively slight importance may be validated at a ceremony of less dignity than a potlatch. One of these names is *Nunuqwelelslaiyen-a*, which has reference to the blue-green sheen of some abalone-shell brought from the east by Raven in the beginning of time, as described in the ancestral myth in which this name is included. For many years there has been considerable laxity with regard to this prerogative, and women lacking it have even been urged to drone in order to add to the solemnity of the occasion and to increase the wonder of the uninitiated.

There is another similar prerogative, enabling the incumbent to drone at mourning ceremonies. In the beginning of time, *Smaoas* of Kimsquit married *Tłiłwaitł*, the daughter of a Bella Bella chief, who had this right. It has since been transmitted from one of her descendants to another at Kimsquit.

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quit. Details of this prerogative were not obtainable, but it seems to follow the general type.

THE PROFESSION OF FIRST BERRY PICKER

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All women can pick berries, but in every village there is at least one who has the prerogative of picking the first of every kind. The origin of this right is lost in dim antiquity, but, like all others, each first berry picker has a special professional name embodied in her ancestral myth which must be duly validated before she can function. One of these is *Stlxwaxwak-nimăn·a*, another is *Łə'yə*. Though normally reserved for women, one of these names is occasionally given to a male child, in which case it is said to have been hermaphroditized. No one would dare to pick berries until the legal picker has paraded up and down the sidewalk carrying on her back her picking basket decorated with a representation of the sun, an act which is believed to ripen the berries.

"Get ready to pick red elderberries [or whatever species is ripe] tomorrow," she keeps calling out.

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The berries may then be picked by anyone. This is repeated for every variety. As far as could be learnt, there was no social mechanism to punish a woman who picked berries before the announcement of the official picker; obedience seems to have been so universal that infractions are said to have been unknown though formerly there may have been some penalty of which even the memory has disappeared.

THE PROFESSION OF WARRIOR

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The profession of warrior is another prerogative handed down from the distant past and requiring validation before it can be used. As with other rights of this type, magical means are in many cases employed to make any young man brave and successful, but there are a number of warriors confirmed as such by the distribution of presents at the time of bestowal on them of professional names. At the present time, it is

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ciety. These are given several times, serving to recall the ceremonies in which the chief took part during his life. At intervals, the new song is repeated and *nuaok* members of the audience join in as they become familiar with the words. Frequently one or more relatives of the deceased dance in his stead during the singing. The details of this rite, especially of the songs used at it, differ considerably according to the actions of the person during life; if a mighty chief, the donor of many potlatches, this fact is described in the song, whereas only an incident from the ancestral myth can be used for a young *nuaok*. If some of his female relatives are professional wailers, they function during the ceremony. In all circumstances, the rite aims to comfort the grieving kinsmen, an end which it usually achieves.

As already described, *nuaok* ceremonial was in a state of transition at the time of the coming of the white man. Previous to that date, a spectacular funeral prerogative had been adopted from Rivers Inlet,[1] which has since been claimed by a number of *nuaok*. All the Bella Coola know of this ceremony, and most of them desire to perform it at the death of a dearly loved relative; at the present time this is possible owing to the slight regard paid to prerogatives, but it is certain that a few years ago it would have been forbidden to most people, and that it was never a universal Bella Coola rite.

When this rite is performed, the corpse is allowed to remain in its coffin for at least one night after the day on which *Mutlakila* came and the *nuaok* songs were sung. Meanwhile the carpenters have prepared an imitation body, usually of rags on a light framework, and a wooden representation of the deceased's crest. Since this figure is to come through the roof and carry aloft the corpse, stout hooks are attached to its feet. In theory, the bird or animal disguise used by the first ancestor

[1] One old Bella Coola stated that this prerogative was obtained during his own lifetime from a Rivers Inlet chief who moved to Tal'ds. It is impossible to state accurately when this ritual was adopted by the Bella Coola, though it is unquestionably of recent origin.

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[764] friends of the deceased, pick up the coffin and carry it through
[764] the hole. In former times it was frequently difficult to obtain
[784] pall-bearers for a slave or friendless person on account of the
[761] taboos to which a person performing this service was subject. If a dead person should be taken through a doorway, others using it would soon follow the corpse to the next world. For the same reason, a body must never be moved across the central line of a house; the passage is, therefore, made from the side where it happens to be lying. As soon as the corpse has been taken through, the removed panks are quickly replaced. Mourners and guests stream out through the doorway and follow the coffin, some of them carrying the bundles containing part of the goods of the deceased. Meanwhile the pall-bearers follow the woman with the torch to the cemetery, taking care to carry their burden so that it faces the direction
[761] in which they are going; if a dead person is allowed to look backwards, he will beckon some relative to accompany him and the one so summoned will soon die.

There is a cemetery near every village, usually fifty to a hundred yards behind the row of houses in a place from which the heavy timber has been cleared. On arrival, the pall-bearers set down their burden close to the spot where the guide has placed her flaming bark on the ground. The personal possessions of the deceased are likewise deposited near the fire, which is kept alight by female relatives throwing on it small quantities of the dead person's clothing and utensils. The near kinsmen of the deceased choose the exact site of the grave, which must never be dug before the bringing of the corpse.
[429] There is no ownership of plots within the cemetery, so that the hole can be made wherever desired. A favourite location is close to the grave of a mother, father, or other near relative, but this is optional; bones are sometimes uncovered when digging, and in that case earth is thrown in once more and a new site selected. There are no professional grave-diggers,
[761] nor are arrangements made in advance for men to perform this duty, but friends, especially strong young men, are willing to

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undertake the task and bring with them tools for the purpose. When the location has been chosen, they start their work without further instructions, taking care that the corpse shall face east. It is said that this is done because the sun rises in that quarter, a statement that is probably a mere rationalization. Graves are usually about five feet deep, so that the digging requires some little time, especially in winter when the ground is frozen. All the young men are willing to help and relieve one another at intervals. Meanwhile the women are squatting on the ground near the coffin, some of them throwing objects on the fire, and all wailing intermittently in a high-pitched, tuneless sob into which a mourner sometimes inserts words as if her agony had overcome her.

"Please return whence you came," moans one woman, while another sobs out:

"Perhaps you were unhappy with us and wanted something we could not give you on earth."

The sun sent down the people of *Sinxł* and *Snułx̣ʷtł*, who accordingly regard that being as their crest. Mourners of those villages, as well as other individuals to whom the sun stands in the same relationship, are accustomed to address him, saying:

"Please increase your light to guide the way. Our child returns to you."

One woman, whose relatives had been killed by jealous rivals owing to their success in giving potlatches, prayed:

"Come no more. Those for whom you gave light have gone; henceforth shine only whither they have departed."

In some cases such doleful lamentations are mere lip service, but they often express very real grief at the loss of a friend or relative. It is also felt that such sympathy affords comfort to the mourning kindred.

As the grave grows deeper, the relatives keep measuring it and the coffin to insure a close fit and avoid unnecessary digging. As soon as it is ready, an elderly man who has been requested to perform the rite, steps to the north side of the

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*556 769 messengers may be marked with the same ritual as at a potlatch, but there is always curtailment of *ɬɬaok* features if rites of that nature are to be omitted.

Meanwhile other preparations have not been neglected. 424 Among the prerogatives embodied in many origin myths, is *556 that of the presence of professional mourners at memorial 769 potlatches. If mention of these is made in the ancient tradition of the donor's ancestral family, it is a matter of pride for [767] him to do as was done by his ancestors in the distant past. For example, it may be recorded that at the memorial potlatch of some ancient chief, a number of his younger relatives appeared with red paint smeared upon their faces, with finely chopped undyed cedar-bark in the hair, or with bands of the [765] same material across their heads. *Älquntäm* had decreed that they should thus exhibit their grief, and the descendants of the chief have since had the privilege of doing likewise. Such signs of mourning may not, however, be worn without proper validation. It is only the members of the ancestral family who are entitled to don these marks, and among them, only those whose right has been confirmed by the distribution of presents. This is a masculine professional prerogative, known [562] by the same name as the feminine one of uttering a droning cry to which it is closely akin. The right is ratified at memorial potlatches, and the donor of one is glad to do so as a means of displaying his own wealth as well as of making plain the glory of his ancestors to whom the one being commemorated has [767] returned. There is no mention of professional mourners in [171] the myths of many families, nor are they ever as important in Bella Coola as among the Bella Bella and other tribes of the outer coast. If such belong to the family of the donor, he notifies the incumbents and asks them to be ready, although, eager to act, they seldom wait for such an invitation.

533 The most difficult task is the preparation of mourning songs *556 at which the singers toil for several weeks. The donor first 769 invites them to his house and recounts the myths from which they must be composed. These may include several traditions